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ABSTRACT

A guide to the use of foreign license plates and car markings in foreign language instruction gives suggestions for introducing license plates as a source of cultural, historical, and geographic information and lists the automobile license plate symbols (alphabetic and numerical) of Austria, France, East and West Germany, Spain, and Switzerland and the international automobile identification abbreviations for 83 countries around the world. Maps of some of the countries, showing regional or political boundaries, are also included. (MSE)

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Automobile License Plate Symbols

An Approach to Foreign Language Learning

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Automobile License Plate Symbols in the Classroom

An Approach to Foreign Language Learning

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Automobile License Plate Symbols in the Classroom: An Approach to Foreign Language Learning

Automobile license plate symbols offer an opportunity to teach foreign languages and culture in a stimulating and unconventional way. Whether as an adjunct to the regular textbook or as an independent teaching aid, these symbols can be used in beginning classes for pronunciation and spelling exercises as well as in advanced courses to provide information about the past and present of the countries in which the target language is spoken. Although the unit focuses on the use of automobile license plate symbols in German classes, French and Spanish instructors will find them equally valuable for teaching their respective language. The appendix lists the license plate symbols of Austria, France, Spain, Switzerland, both German states, and the international identifications of major countries around the world.[1]

The instructor begins by asking the students how car license plates in the United States differ from state to state. After a general discussion about colors, the pros and cons of personalized license plates, numbering systems, and, possibly, the meaning of such license plate inscriptions as "The Show-Me State" or "Land of Enchantment," the instructor directs the students' attention to international automobile identification symbols. After handing out a list with these international identification symbols, the instructor practices the correct pronunciation of letters in the target language. Proceeding from there, the instructor then introduces the students to the names of different countries used in the target language (Deutschland, Germany; Alemania, Allemagne). This should be accompanied by showing the actual location of each country on a world map hanging on the wall.

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[1]I gratefully acknowledge the support and supply of materials from the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Los Angeles; the French Government Tourist Office and the Consulate General of France in Beverly Hills; the Consulate General of Switzerland in Los Angeles; the Consulate General of Spain in Los Angeles; and the Royal Automobile Club of Spain.

After a brief discussion of various countries around the world, during which the instructor quizzes the students about, for example, which languages are spoken in Luxemburg, Brazil, or Haiti, the instructor asks the students to name all of the countries in which the target language is spoken officially. In a German class, the instructor then may hand out one or all the listings of license plate symbols as used in Austria, Switzerland, and the two German states. Working with these listings, the students again practice pronouncing the alphabet in German. Then, as the next step, the instructor introduces to the students the peculiar pronunciation and spelling of certain German cities such as Soest, Duisburg, Itzehoe, Uelzen, or Bayreuth. The listings can also serve as an aid to practicing particularly difficult sounds for American students, such as the Umlaut, the ch, or the German z and o sounds (in Fürth, Tübingen, München, Mönchengladbach, Bottrop, Cochem, Zweibücken).

It is naturally advantageous to point out the location of each city on a map. In so doing, the instructor relates to the class interesting bits of information about an area or city. For example, after identifying the letter K as the symbol for the city of Cologne (Köln) and indicating the location along the Rhine River, the instructor in a German class may explain to the students that Cologne was founded and named by the Romans, that it is a center for the yearly carnival activities, that the Ford Motor Company is one of the most important employers in that city, making Opel and Fiesta cars, or that the term "men's cologne" is derived from the famous fragrance 4711 (Kölnisch Wasser) which is made in that city.

Automobile license plate symbols also can serve as a basis for providing the students with cultural and historical information. For example, the instructor in a German or French class uses these symbols to acquaint the students with the 26 cantons forming the Swiss Confederation, their location, when they joined the confederation, and which language is spoken in each canton. In a German class, the instructor may explain the double status of the two city-states Hamburg (HH) and Bremen (HB) among the "Länder" in the Federal Republic, as well as comment on the term "Hansa." A French instructor may point out that the automobile license plate numbers identifying the "department" of registration in France are identical to the zip code numbers on mailing addresses. Rather than showing the students the location of each "department" on a map, the instructor may challenge the students to finding the location themselves.

Obviously there are many more possibilities for using license plate symbols to enliven and enhance the effectiveness of teaching foreign languages. Whether to supplement textbook material or as an independent basis for language instruction and cultural information, license plate symbols can provide the imaginative instructor with options that are essential to successful classroom teaching. In a German class, listings with license plate symbols provide an excellent opportunity to enrich the material contained in 18 test pamphlets taken from written driver's tests administered in the Federal Republic,[2] while in a French class, license plate symbols can be used in conjunction with a booklet "La Conduite en Anglais-Français" to make vocabulary learning more interesting.[3] Whether they are used in an advanced culture and civilization course to teach the geographical composition of a country, or in an elementary language class to aid in teaching pronunciation and spelling, automobile license plate symbols offer a unique opportunity for a versatile approach to the presentation of relevant material in the foreign language classroom.

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[2]This material, under the heading "Driver Training in the Federal Republic of Germany" is available, for a moderate price, from the American Association of Teachers of German, 523 Building, Suite 201, Route 38, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034.

[3]To receive "La Conduite en Anglais-Français" write to: Philip Grosse, 5055 North 83rd Street, Scottsdale, AZ 85253. Enclose $2.75, which includes postage.

Appendix

Automobile License Plate Symbols of Austria

B	Burgenland
K	Carinthia (Kärnten)
N	Lower Austria (Nieder-Österreich)
O	Upper Austria (Ober-Österreich)
S	Salzburg
ST	Styria (Steiermark)
T	Tyrol (Tirol)
V	Vorarlberg
W	Vienna (Wien)
BH	Military (Bundesheer)

Automobile License Plate Symbols of France

01	Ain	30	Gard
02	Aisne	31	Haute-Garonne
03	Allier	32	Gers
04	Basses-Alpes	33	Gironde
05	Alpes-de-Haute-Provence	34	Hérault
06	Alpes-Maritimes	35	Ille-et-Vilaine
07	Ardèche	36	Indre
08	Ardennes	37	Indre-et-Loire
09	Ariège	38	Isère
10	Aube	39	Jura
11	Aude	40	Landes
12	Aveyron	41	Loir-et-Cher
13	Bouches-du-Rhône	42	Loire
14	Calvados	43	Haute-Loire
15	Cantal	44	Loire-Atlantique
16	Charente	45	Loiret
17	Charente-Maritime	46	Lot
18	Cher	47	Lot-et-Garonne
19	Corrèze	48	Lozère
20	Corse	49	Maine-et-Loire
21	Côte d'Or	50	Manche
22	Côtes du Nord	51	Marne
23	Creuse	52	Haute-Marne
24	Dordogne	53	Mayenne
25	Doubs	54	Meurthe-et-Moselle
26	Drôme	55	Meuse
27	Eure	56	Morbihan
28	Eure-et-Loir	57	Moselle
29	Finistère	58	Nièvre

59	Nord
60	Oise
61	Orne
62	Pas-de-Calais
63	Puy-de-Dôme
64	Pyrénées-Atlantiques
65	Hautes-Pyrénées
66	Pyrénées-Orientales
67	Bas-Rhin
68	Haut-Rhin
69	Rhône
70	Haute-Saône
71	Saône-et-Loire
72	Sarthe
73	Savoie
74	Haute-Savoie
75	Paris (ville de)
76	Seine-Maritime
77	Seine-et-Marne
78	Yvelines
79	Deux-Sèvres
80	Somme
81	Tarn
82	Tarn-et-Garonne
83	Var
84	Vaucluse
85	Vendée
86	Vienne
87	Haute-Vienne
88	Vosges
89	Yonne
90	Territoire de Belfort
91	Essonne
92	Hauts-de-Seine
93	Seine-St-Denis
94	Val-de-Marne
95	Val d'Oise

9

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Automobile License Plate Symbols of the Federal Republic of Germany

A

A	Augsburg
AA	Aalen
AB	Aschaffenburg
AC	Aachen
AIC	Aichach
AK	Altenkirchen
AM	Amberg, Stadt
AN	Ansbach
AÖ	Altötting
AS	Amberg-Sulzbach
AUR	Aurich
AW	Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler
AZ	Alzay

B

B	Berlin (West)
BA	Bamberg
BAD	Baden-Baden
BB	Böblingen
BC	Biberach
BG	Bundesgrenzschutz
BGL	Berchtesgadener Land
BI	Bielefeld
BIR	Birkenfeld
BIT	Bitburg
BL	Balingen
BM	Bergheim
BN	Bonn
BO	Bochum
BOR	Borken
BOT	Bottrop
BP	Bundespost
BRA	Brake
BS	Braunschweig
BT	Bayreuth
BÜS	Büsingen

C

CE	Celle
CHA	Cham
CLP	Cloppenburg
CO	Coburg
COC	Cochem
COE	Coesfeld
CUX	Cuxhaven
CW	Calw

D

D	Düsseldorf
DA	Darmstadt
DAH	Dachau
DAN	Dannenberg
DAU	Daun
DB	Bundesbahn
DEG	Deggendorf
DEL	Delmenhorst
DFG	Dingolfing
DH	Diepholz

DLG Dillingen
DN Düren
DO Dortmund
DON Donauwörth
DT Detmold
DU Duisburg
DÜW Bad Dürkheim

E

E Essen
EBE Ebersberg
ED Erding
EI Eichstätt
EL Emsland
EM Emmendigen
EMD Emden
EMS Bad Ems
EN Ennepe-Ruhr-Kreis
ER Erlangen, Stadt
ERB Erbach
ERH Erlangen-Höchstadt
ES Esslingen
ESW Eschwege
EU Euskirchen

F

F Frankfurt
FAL Fallingbostel
FB Friedberg (Hessen)
FD Fulda
FDS Freudenstadt
FFB Fürstenfeldbruck
FL Flensburg
FN Friedrichshafen
FO Forchheim
FR Freiburg
FRG Freyung
FRI Friesland
FS Freising
FT Frankenthal
FÜ Fürth

G

GE Gelsenkirchen
GER Germersheim
GAP Garmisch-Partenk
GF Gifhorn
GG Groß-Gerau
GI Gießen
GL ßergisch Gladbach
GM Gummersbach
GÖ Göttingen
GP Göppingen
GS Goslar
GT Gütersloh
GZ Günzburg

H

H Hannover
HA Hagen
HAM Hamm
HAS Haßfurt
HB Bremen und Bremerhaven
HD Heidelberg
HDH Heidenheim

HE Helmstedt
HEF Bad Hersfeld
HEI Heide
HER Herne
HF Herford
HG Bad Hamburg
HH Hamburg
HI Hildesheim
HL Lübeck
HM Hameln
HN Heilbronn
HO Hof
HOL Holzminden
HOM Homburg (Saar)
HP Heppenheim
HR Homberg
HS Heinsberg
HSK Hochsauerlandkreis
HU Hanau
HX Höxter

I

IGB St. Ingbert
IN Ingolstadt
IZ Itzehoe

K

K Köln
KA Karlsruhe
KB Korbach
KC Kronach
KE Kemoten
KEH Kelheim
KF Kaufbeuren
KG Bad Kissingen
KH Bad Kreuznach
KI Kiel
KIB Kirchheimbolanden
KL Kaiserslautern
KLE Kleve
KN Konstanz
KO Koblenz, Stadt
KR Krefeld
KS Kassel
KT Kitzingen
KU Kulmbach
KÜN Künzelsau
KUS Kusel

L

L Lahn-Dill-Kreis
LA Landshut
LAU Lauf
LB Ludwigsburg
LD Landau, Stadt
LER Leer
LEV Leverkusen
LG Lüneburg
LI Lindau
LIF Lichtenfels
LL Landsberg (Lech)
LM Limburg
LÖ Lörrach
LU Ludwigshafen

M

M	München
MA	Mannheim
MB	Miesbach
ME	Mettmann
MG	Mönchengladbach
MH	Mülheim
MI	Minden
MIL	Miltenberg
MK	Märkischer Kreis
MM	Memmingen
MN	Mindelheim
MOS	Mosbach
MR	Marburg
MS	Münster
MSP	Main-Spessart
MTK	Main-Taunus-Kreis
MÜ	Mühldorf
MYK	Mayen-Koblenz
MZ	Mainz
MZG	Merzig

N

N	Nürnberg
ND	Neuburg (Donau)
NE	Neuss
NEA	Neustadt (Aisch)
NES	Bad Neustadt
NEW	Neustadt (Waldnaab)
NF	Nordfriesland
NI	Nienburg
NK	Neunkirchen
NM	Neumarkt
NMS	Neumünster
NOH	Nordhorn
NOM	Northeim
NR	Neuwied (Rhein)
NU	Neu-Ulm
NW	Neustadt (Weinstraße)

O

OA	Oberallgäu
OAL	Ostallgäu
OB	Oberhausen
OD	Bad Oldesloe
OE	Olpe
OF	Offenbach
OG	Offenburg
OH	Ostholstein
OHA	Osterode (Harz)
OHZ	Osterholz-Scharmbeck
OL	Oldenburg
OS	Osnabrück

P

PA	Passau
PAF	Pfaffenhofen
PAN	Pfarrkirchen
PB	Paderborn
PE	Peine
PF	Pforzheim
PI	Pinneberg
PLÖ	Plön
PS	Pirmasens

R

R	Regensburg
RA	Rastatt
RD	Rendsburg
RE	Recklinghausen
REG	Regen
RH	Roth
RO	Rosenheim
ROW	Rotenburg
RS	Remscheid
RT	Reutlingen
RUD	Rüdesheim
RV	Ravensburg
RW	Rottweil
RZ	Ratzeburg

S

S	Stuttgart
SAD	Schwandorf
SB	Saarbrücken
SC	Schwabach
SE	Bad Segeberg
SG	Solingen
SHA	Schwäbisch Hall
SHG	Schaumburg
SI	Siegen
SIG	Sigmaringen
SIM	Simmern
SL	Schleswig
SLS	Saarlouis
SO	Soest
SP	Speyer
SR	Straubing
ST	Steinfurt
STA	Starnberg
STD	Stade
SÜW	Südliche Weinstraße
SU	Siegburg
SW	Schweinfurt
SWA	Bad Schwalbach
SZ	Salzgitter

T

TBB	Tauberbischofsheim
TIR	Tirschenreuth
TÖL	Bad Tölz
TR	Trier
TS	Traunstein
TÜ	Tübingen
TUT	Tuttlingen

U

UE	Uelzen
UL	Ulm
UN	Unna

V

VB	Vogelsbergkreis
VEC	Vechta
VER	Verden
VIE	Viersen
VK	Völklingen
VS	Villingen-Schwenningen

W

W	Wuppertal
WAF	Warendorf
WEN	Weiden
WES	Wesel
WF	Wolfenbüttel
WHV	Wilhelmshaven
WI	Wiesbaden
WIL	Wittlich
WL	Winsen
WM	Weilheim
WN	Waiblingen
WND	St. Wendel
WO	Worms
WOB	Wolfsburg
WST	Westerstede
WT	Waldhut-Tiengen
WÜ	Würzburg
WUG	Weißenburg
WUN	Wunsiedel
WW	Westerwald

Y

Y	Bundeswehr

Z

ZW	Zweibrücken

Automobile License Plate Symbols of the German Democratic Republic

A	Rostock
B	Schwerin
C	Neubrandenburg
D,P	Potsdam
E	Frankfurt-Oder
F,L	Erfurt
G,Z	Cottbus
H,M	Magdeburg
I	Berlin (East)
K,V	Halle
N	Gora
O	Suhl
R,Y	Dresden
S,U	Leipzig
T,X	Karl-Marx-Stadt

Automobile License Plate Symbols of Spain

VI	Alava	LU	Lugo
AB	Albacete	M	Madrid
A	Alicante	MA	Málaga
AL	Almería	MU	Murcia
AV	Avila	NA	Navarra
BA	Badajoz	OR	Orense
PM	Baleares	O	Oviedo
B	Barcelona	P	Palencia
BU	Burgos	GC	Las Palmas
CC	Cáceres	PO	Pontevedra
CA	Cádiz	SA	Salamanca
CS	Castellón	TF	Santa Cruz
CR	Ciudad Real	S	Santander
CO	Córdoba	SG	Segovia
C	La Coruña	SE	Sevilla
CU	Cuenca	SO	Soria
GE	Gerona	T	Tarragona
GR	Granada	TE	Teruel
GU	Guadalajara	TO	Toledo
SS	Guipúzcoa	V	Valencia
H	Huelva	VA	Valladolid
HU	Huesca	BI	Vizcaya
J	Jaén	ZA	Zamora
LE	León	Z	Zaragoza
L	Lérida	CE	Ceuta
LO	Logroño	ML	Melilla

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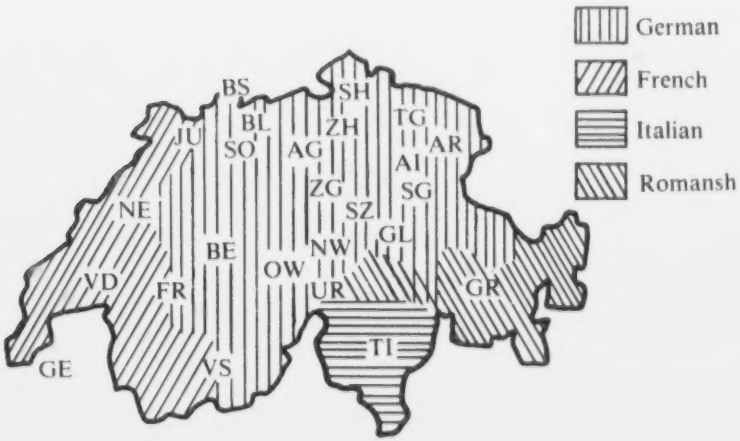
Automobile License Plate Symbols of Switzerland

AG	Aargau	NW	Niwalden
AI	Appenzell I.-Rh.	OW	Obwalden
AR	Appenzell A.-Rh.	SG	St. Gallen
BE	Berne	SH	Schaffhausen
BL	Baselland	SO	Solothurn
BS	Basle	SZ	Schwyz
FR	Fribourg	TG	Thurgau
GE	Geneva	TI	Ticino
GL	Glarus	UR	Uri
GR	Grisons	VD	Vaud
JU	Jura	VS	Valais
LU	Lucerne	ZG	Zug
NE	Neuchatel	ZH	Zurich



International Automobile Indentification Symbols

A	Austria
AL	Albania
AUS	Australia
B	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
BR	Brazil
C	Cuba
CDN	Canada
CH	Switzerland
CO	Colombia
CR	Costa Rica
CS	Czechoslovakia
D	Federal Republic of Germany
DDR	German Democratic Republic
DK	Denmark
DOM	Dominican Republic
DZ	Algeria
E	Spain
EC	Ecuador
ES	El Salvador
ET	Egypt
ETH	Ethiopia
F	France
FL	Liechtenstein
GB	Great Britain and Northern Ireland
GCA	Guatemala
GH	Ghana
GR	Greece
H	Hungary
HK	Hong Kong
I	Italy
IL	Israel
IND	India
IR	Iran
IRL	Ireland
IRQ	Iraq
IS	Iceland
J	Japan
JA	Jamaica
JOR	Jordan
KWT	Kuwait
L	Luxemburg
LAO	Laos
LAR	Libya
MA	Morocco
MAL	Malaysia
MC	Monaco
MEX	Mexico
N	Norway
NIC	Nicaragua
NL	Netherlands
NZ	New Zealand
P	Portugal
PA	Panama
PAK	Pakistan
PE	Peru
PL	Poland
PY	Paraguay

R	Romania
RA	Argentina
RC	Republic of China
RCH	Chile
RH	Haiti
RI	Indonesia
RL	Lebanon
ROK	Republic of Korea
RP	Philippines
S	Sweden
SW	Switzerland
SF	Finland
SU	Soviet Union
SYR	Syria
T	Thailand
TN	Tunisia
TR	Turkey
U	Uruguay
USA	United States of America
V	Vatican City
VN	Vietnam
YU	Yugoslavia
YV	Venezuela
ZA	South Africa
ZR	Zaire